

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 617.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1875.

PRICE 1½d.

THE AUSTRALIAN DESERT.

ON looking at a map of the Australasian continent, one cannot fail to observe that, though Western Australia occupies a larger space than any of its sister colonies, a vast extent of it remains a blank, unmarked as the dwelling-place of man, a huge expanse of desolation; and this although the earliest discovered portions of the continent are included within its boundary. The story of Western Australia is one of almost incredible hardship, disappointment, and gloom, but also of pluck, determination, and patience, though, so fettered has the energy of the colonists been by the nature of the country and the small area of agricultural land yet discovered, that in 1848 the inhabitants seriously entertained the project of abandoning the settlement for good. Since then, repeated expeditions have been organised for the exploration of the great blank space which constitutes a little less than one-fifth of the entire continent, and forms the western slope of that which geographers call 'the Great Interior Basin.' On the whole, these expeditions have achieved but little, at a great cost of life, money, toil, and suffering; and there is hardly any hope that it will ever be possible to construct that overland route from east to west, which would be of immense advantage to both regions, for South Australia needs fresh outlets for her capital, and Western Australia longs to pierce through the mystery of the desert which shuts her in upon the landward side, and says to her people, 'Thus far shall ye go, and no farther.' The explorations which preceded that of Colonel Egerton Warburton—known severally as the expeditions of Sturt, Eyre, Stuart, Gregory, and McKinlay—had, with the exception of Mr Stuart's discoveries on the banks of the Adelaide River, which led to the addition of hundreds of thousands of fertile acres to the colony of South Australia, been almost destitute of result. The upshot of them all is briefly described by Mr Eden as follows: 'We have followed Sturt until a sea of sand checked his progress; we have seen the brothers Gregory,

one striking from the north, the other from the north-west, both brought to a standstill by the same obstacle; and of the arid nature of the country bordering the Great Bight, Mr Eyre's terrible journey has sufficiently convinced us. On the other hand, we have Stuart discovering a fertile belt, running due north and south through the very centre of the continent, by means of which the communication between the two seas had been rendered comparatively easy. Diverge from it fifty miles east or west, and the sand-ridges in all their hideous uniformity are before the traveller. Colonel Egerton Warburton availed himself of Stuart's route until he gained the centre of the continent, and then struck boldly into that terrible western desert of which his predecessors had given so appalling a description.*

The first great and hopeful difference between Colonel Warburton's expedition and its predecessors was the employment of camels. In 1866, Mr Elder, an influential and wealthy colonist, imported 121 camels from Kurrachee, with a dozen Afghan drivers, and the animals were found to thrive admirably upon the Australian vegetation. The Afghan drivers taught the colonists how to treat and drive the great strange beasts; making them understand that they must lay aside stock-whips and bad language, for neither would avail with the camel, who is most docile and hard-working while he is well treated, but quite unmanageable and exceedingly dangerous if he be not. Mr Elder's camels increased and multiplied, and proved themselves most valuable for every kind of service in which they were employed. In August 1872, the advisability of exploring the interior between Central Mount Stuart and Perth was recognised by the government of Western Australia, and the Warburton expedition was organised. Mr Elder generously placed his camels at the disposal of the government, and offered to provide native drivers, both free of expense. The

* *Journey Across the Western Interior of Australia.* By Colonel Peter Egerton Warburton, C.M.G. With an Introduction by Charles H. Eden, Esq. London: Sampson Low & Co.

government afterwards withdrew from the undertaking; and Mr Elder, assisted by Mr Hughes, also an influential colonist, resolved to carry through, upon their own responsibility, a liberal and patriotic design, which deserves acknowledgment and commemoration.

A glance at the map shews us Beltana station, the headquarters of the camels, where the party was to muster, and thence to proceed to the Peake, the principal depot of the persons employed in the construction of the overland telegraph. From this point, Colonel Warburton was to make a *détour* to the westward, through unknown country, test the capabilities of the camels, familiarise the whole party with the character of the territory they would afterwards have to penetrate, and rejoin the line at Central Mount Stuart. There he would receive a reinforcement of camels, and 'strike out straight for the capital of Western Australia.'

With some modifications, this plan was carried out; and on April 15, 1873, the exploring party started from Alice Springs on their way through the untracked regions and 'antres wild.' It consisted of Colonel Egerton Warburton and his son, an accomplished bushman; Lewis, an attendant on them; two Afghan camel-drivers; Dennis White, who was to cook, and act as assistant camel-driver; and Charley, a native lad. They had four riding, twelve baggage, and one spare camel, and six months' provisions. The start of these seven human beings for the wilderness, with their long train of grotesque animals in single file, was a curious sight—those who saw it could hardly have pictured, let their imagination have been ever so vivid, what lay before the small, stout-hearted party. The first part of the journey lay over grassy plains; then came scrub, and grass again, and the first terrible touch of apprehension of want of water. They had been assured that the Hugh River would be found as a creek beyond the Mc'Donnell ranges; but no creek was there; and without water to drink or to cook their food with, they lay down beneath the stars on the fifth night of their journey. The next day, rain fell in abundance, and Colonel Warburton recorded the experience of those few hours in his journal, with the comment: 'I hope we may never forget this day.' He had probably maturely considered the enterprise he had embarked in, and studied its risks; but it would have been happily impossible for him to conceive to what insignificance the future sufferings which lay before him and his party would reduce the remembrance of that day. From that time the word 'water' holds an ominously prominent place in the colonel's journal; to the finding of water everything is subservient; the story makes one thirsty as one reads it. Sometimes water is struck on the day's march, and the camp is peacefully pitched; sometimes there is no surface-water, and a scanty supply is with difficulty obtained from rock-holes and clay-pits. The face of the country is undulatory, and covered with the cruel spinifex, and with casuarina forest, the tall, straight-stemmed trees lending it a melancholy beauty. 'The trees stand in thousands and thousands,' says Colonel Warburton of one great tract over which they marched early in May; 'but there is not a scrap of food nor a drop of water in the country.' On the 9th, having sustained a severe loss of a fine camel,

they reached some grand and imposing glens, and there the camels behaved provokingly. They were so frightened at the stupendous rocks, that they could not be got to the water, and would not even taste it when it was brought to them in a bucket. This, too, when it was of so much importance that they should lay in a good supply to carry them through the dry country beyond the glens. It must have been hard for the men to turn their backs on such a scene as those glens presented—on the majestic beauty of them, and the bountiful water-supply. At the entrance of the first glen, a huge column of basalt has been launched from a height of three hundred feet, and has stuck perpendicularly in the ground, where it stands sentry over the beautiful pool which occupies the whole width of the entrance to the glen. 'The pool is about fifteen feet wide, fifty long, and the basaltic walls which inclose it are about three hundred feet in height. A turn in the glen at a right angle to the first shews a still grander split in the mountain, with a circular pool of deep clear water, almost wholly roofed over by a single huge slab of basalt. As the sun cannot reach this water, it never can fail.' How often must this scene have come back to the explorers afterwards, with all the cruel charm of a mirage, to their sick senses and fainting hearts! This last glimpse of beauty was succeeded by scrub and spinifex, or, as it is more expressively called, porcupine grass, a horrid growth, which contributed largely to both the toil and the danger of their task. Colonel Warburton describes it in his plain, patient way as a sharp, spiny grass, growing in tussocks of from eighteen inches to five feet in diameter, of the colour of wheat-straw, so that it only adds desolation to the aspect of the wilderness. It is quite uneatable, even for camels, who are compelled to thread their way painfully through its mazes; and to horses it proves most destructive, piercing and cutting their legs, which in a very short time become fly-blown, when the animals have to be either destroyed or abandoned. The country it grows in is utterly useless for pastoral purposes. The presence of this harassing and destructive growth must be constantly borne in mind among the hardships of the explorers' journey.

On they go through the dreary land, under the hot sun, forced to diverge constantly from the track in search of water; suffering from want of bread and vegetables; delayed by the straying of the camels; terribly inconvenienced by some of those animals getting sore back; alarmed by the illness of one of the drivers; and when they have travelled 1700 miles, and yet have hardly made any progress towards Perth, disheartened by the loss of three camels, which were vainly pursued for a hundred miles! Then came salt lagoons, and dust-storms, during which the men crouched by the side of the beasts, to hide from the swirling clouds of sand and ashes from the burnt ground—burned by the natives when they had camped there. Once or twice they caught sight of some wretched wandering natives; but these fled from them, and the party could only follow up their tracks, in hope of coming to the blessed water. The story is terrible in its very monotony; over and over again come entries like this: 'I sent two men, in the evening, on our back-track, to see if they could trace to water the natives whose yam-digging marks we saw yesterday. This is our last chance;

if it fail, we must go over those terrible sand-hills again to our last water! It will ruin the camels; but there is no alternative. I dare not work them on a chance. What they can do must be all on a certainty of getting water at the end.' The attempt was successful on this particular occasion; water was found, and the party pushed on over sandy desert towards a range of basaltic hills, which their leader hoped might be the entrance to a better country; but the hope proved delusive, and the difficulties increased from that time. On the 14th September it became evident that the camels were breaking down, the men only holding out, and that day-travelling must be abandoned. They were journeying through the sand-ridges, which are totally unlike any other known portion of the globe, and form a wilderness utterly divested of animal life, portions of which appear as though they had recently formed part of the bed of the ocean, but whereon shrubs are found which supply food for camels, though nothing edible to a human being. Misfortunes come thick upon the party. Their 'master bull-camel,' a beast which keeps all the others in a well-understood subjection, eats poison, and dies; two riding camels are struck in the loins by the night-wind, and cannot stir; they are abandoned; and next day a similar accident occurs to the riding camel of Mr Warburton. The camel-men say the disease is common in their country, and always comes in the night, when a certain star is in the ascendant. They killed this animal for meat, and the necessity for doing so was the first indication of the new distress—want of provisions—that was coming upon them. The knowledge of the constant danger of the camels from this wind-blight came with a shock to Colonel Warburton, and it proved only the beginning of evils.

In one year after the departure of the exploring party from Adelaide, in five months after their start from Alice Springs, we find them struggling through awful wastes, with the sick and emaciated creatures which are destined to be their disgusting but sole resource against starvation, in such straits, that only two riding camels are left. The tents and every article except guns and ammunition, and just so much clothing as is required for decency, have been thrown away, and they are in a country where, if they do not come on natives' tracks, and find their well, they will have to go back fifty miles, and so exact from the quickly failing strength of the camels an additional hundred miles of travel before they can recover their present position. On the anniversary they did find a well, and they rested awhile; but when they pressed on again, it was amid torments from ants, flies, and especially from the hideously ill-smelling 'honey-fly,' great heat, the illness of every man of the party, and with a dying camel, whose loss reduced their number to eight; forced too to retreat to the forsaken camp, a week later, because there was no water to be found; so that in ten days they had only made a few miles' advance, were already on short allowance of food, and had the prospect of starvation before them.

On the 1st of October they went on in a north-westerly direction, having found tracks. Here is the leader's quiet, brief entry of the situation: 'Our hopes are raised at finding a different class of water, and though it has taken us to lat. 20° 2', we must follow its line; our great disadvantage lies in being unable to make any extensive search in our

front, for want of camels, or to travel by day, on account of the heat, which utterly prostrates them. When we move, we can't see; when we stop, we can't search.' Suffocating heat at night, and ceaseless worry of insects precluding sleep; pressing on by night, to be driven back by want of water; failing provisions; days 'which only men can bear uninjured; the beasts cannot stand the heat;' the chance, if they attempt to make more progress, of losing their camels, and dying of thirst; the certainty, if they stand still where water is, of being able to prolong their lives only for the time that their sun-dried camel-flesh may be made to last. So comes to them October, and the fifth remaining camel knocks up. Lewis, whose exertions all through the journey have been preternatural, finds a wretched well, which yields one bucket after three hours of hard work; but the camel cannot be saved; so they kill it, and have its jerked-meat between them and starvation; but the loss of it marks another stage on their way to destruction. Great was the economy these unhappy explorers practised in the utilising of the poor carcases of their much-enduring, willing, worn-out beasts. To eat a camel meant to eat him *right through*; the inner portions first, not the liver and dainty parts only, but all. 'No shred was passed over; head, feet, hide, tail, all went into the boiling-pot, even the very bones were stewed down for soup first, and then broken for the sake of the marrow they contained. The flesh was cut into thin flat strips, and hung upon the bushes to dry in the sun. The tough thick hide was cut up and parboiled, the coarse hair was scraped off with a knife, and the leather-like substance replaced in the pot and stewed until it became like the inside of a carpenter's glue-pot, both to the taste and to the smell. Nourishment there was little or none, but it served to fill up space, and so was valuable to starving men. The head was steadily attacked, and soon reduced to a polished skull, tongue, brains, and cheeks having all disappeared.' As the worn-out creatures were ultimately the sole salvation of their masters, the particulars of this horrid food are interesting. Out of the whole number killed for food by Colonel Warburton, not one threw to the surface of the cooking bucket a single particle of fat. Exhausted and diseased, they afforded no more nutriment than is found in the bark of a tree, yet such was the food which *did* preserve the lives of the explorers, and without it they must have certainly perished.

One day in October they met some natives, who let them take water from their well, and bartered with them a wallaby, 'without which,' says Colonel Warburton, who was exhausted by illness and deprivation of sleep, 'I should not have reached our camp that night.' At the end of the month they are creeping on, sometimes forced to return on their tracks, having no beasts which could be sent on to scout, while the others were resting. Here is the colonel's ration-list for one Sunday: 'Half a quart of flour and water at 4 A.M., a hard sinewy bit of raw, that is, sun-dried but uncooked camel-meat at 2 P.M. Supper uncertain, perhaps some roasted acacia seeds; these are very small and hard; they grow on bushes, not trees, and the natives use them roasted and pounded.' What an event it was when a bird was shot, to be eaten uncleaned, lest anything should be lost; and how

rarely birds came in sight! The flies were quite horrible, and kept men and animals in perpetual torment, while they attacked the slightest abrasion of the skin, and turned it into a festering wound. The explorers were as much imprisoned as if they had been in a jail, without any of the advantages of prison dormitory and dietary; and owing to the fierce heat, which would have rendered it impossible that men or beasts could have lived long without an abundant supply of water, it seemed likely their advance might be stopped until the summer tropical rains of January should fall. This did not befall them, however, for the indefatigable Lewis, and Charley the black boy, searched out wells towards the south-west, and once more they started, hoping, by travelling on 'known water' for some days, to get the animals into condition for a rush across the dreadful sand-hills lying between them and the Oakover River, to reach which was now their only chance for life. At this time their sufferings from the ants were frightful. Often when the vertical sun poured down in full fierceness on their heads, and the poor shade afforded even by a bush would have been an inestimable blessing, the travellers were driven away from the shelter by their relentless persecutors, and in despair flung themselves down on the burning sand, where it was too hot even for an ant. Their flight was to be on 4th November, and they would have to take their chance of finding a little water somewhere in the one hundred and fifty miles of pitiless desert which separated them, the starving men, and their shrunken train of worn-out beasts, from the Oakover. 'Richard is very weak, and so am I,' writes the leader as they are starting at sunset. They marched that night through darkness caused by an eclipse of the moon, in which their weary procession must have looked weird and ghostly, and made twenty-five miles.

From this point the story becomes more harrowing than any that has ever been told, except that awful history which Mr Wills continued until he died of starvation, also in the Australian desert, and it includes every kind of bodily suffering, with hope deferred, and its attendant heart-sickness; for they fondly fancied themselves within three days' journey of the Oakover, whereas they did not strike the creek, its tributary, which denoted their release from the horrible desert in which they were wandering, until 2d November, a month, all but two days, after the start, of which they had hoped to make a rush. The terrible sand-hills, the cruel spinifex, the ailing animals, the constant halts and returns for water, the ever-vain hope of finding a country in which there might be something to eat, the actual experience of a country where there was not even a crow or a snake, the absence of all nutrition in the flesh of the diseased camels, which were one by one released from their sufferings by the knife—the sense of the uselessness of it all, the hopeless barrenness of the land they had come to see, the physical pain, and the natural shrinking of the spirit from death in such a place and such a way, make up a picture which presents itself in sombre colours to the least active imagination. Throughout, Lewis is a constant source of admiration and wonder; and once, when the leader, having just recorded his belief that men have never traversed so vast an extent of continuous desert, adds that they cannot get the few wallabies there are in the spinifex,

that the last riding camel has given in, that rest, even in their state of exhaustion, is rendered impossible by the ants, and that, if the advance party does not bring them relief, he and his son cannot live twenty-four hours—Lewis comes up with a bag of water, and news of a native camp only twelve miles off. They killed the sick camel, and started for the camp; and again Lewis went on to seek for indications of the Oakover, while Colonel Warburton and his son remained at the camp—where there was nothing to eat—keeping themselves and the others alive on the fragments of the last slain beast. Should they have to kill another, some of the party would have to walk, and not one was equal to the exertion. They *had* to kill another; for they did not get away until 1st December, after Lewis's return and report that he had found the road to the Oakover. Then Colonel Warburton records a horrible four days' march—tropical heat, thirst, hunger, no sleep, constant torture from the ants, semi-blindness, such weakness that he had to be tied on his camel's back, as the animal plunged head foremost down the steep sand-hills; and on the fourth day they camped on a tributary to the Oakover, and were out of the wilderness indeed, in a place where the camels could have water and rest.

But the haunting question of food for themselves drove the party on; on the 6th they had been two days without food, and could find nothing but bulrush roots. They were forced to return to the creek, and to kill another camel; and now there were but three left. There were fish in the water, but no means of taking them. 'A light twine-net would be worth its weight in diamonds to us now,' says Colonel Warburton; 'let no Australian traveller ever go out again without one.' It was nearly over with them; the camel-meat did not revive them; soon the strongest would be unequal to the least exertion; help in food and carriage must be obtained, or they must all die. The only thing to be done was to locate the party at the best attainable place on the Oakover, and send two men down the river to look for the settler's station. If they should live to reach it, and return with aid, the others might have been able to endure the starvation until their return; they might find them still alive. With this dim, grim hope, they struggled on to a beautiful mocking spot on the river-edge, and camped. 'I sent off Lewis and one Afghan,' says Colonel Warburton, 'on the only two camels that could travel. They are to look for the station of Messrs Harper and Company; we do not know how far it may be, or whether it may not have been abandoned, but must take our chance; it is the only one we have.' Then the four men and the boy, and the one camel—for whom the desert had been too much, for though it had food and water and rest, it was dying, and they could only hope it would last until the time should come when they must kill it, to keep themselves alive a little longer—waited! Lewis left them on the 13th; on the 19th, they killed the last camel, and ate voraciously 'all day.' What if he should find no station? How is he to hold out with his scanty supply of food? Awful questions these, and their minds can hold no others. Christmas Day! And they 'lie sweltering on the ground, and would be thankful to have the pickings out of any pig's trough.' On the 29th, they have abundance of water, a little tobacco, a few bits of dried camel, and

a hope that the rain will bring up some thistles or pigweed. They cannot catch the fish; they cannot find 'possums or snakes, the birds will not sit down by them, and they are unable to get up and go to the birds. On that morning, Colonel Warburton wrote these lines in his journal: 'We must wait patiently. I am sure Lewis will do all that can be done. His endurance, perseverance, and judgment are beyond all praise. My great fear is that the summer rains may set in, and stop his return, but we must hope for the best.' A few hours afterwards, Lewis returned! He had found the station one hundred and seventy miles off, and brought back ample supplies for all the wants of the party, with six horses to carry them down to Roebourne.

No man's life had been lost, but a year of intense suffering had been endured by the men and the beasts in the exploring party. The result is absolutely *nil*, except in honour. Colonel Warburton and his son did their duty nobly; Lewis proved himself a hero. The Council and Burgesses of the city of Perth declare that 'the expedition has prepared the way for future explorers to disclose to us the characteristics and resources of our island continent.' Considering the nature of these characteristics and resources—horrible wilderness, and the absence of anything to support human life—we think the less they are disclosed the better, and hope Colonel Egerton Warburton's expedition may have no successor.

THE FLAG OF DISTRESS.

CHAPTER XXXII.—'AMBRE LA PUERTA!'

ANOTHER sun has shone upon San Francisco Bay, and gone down in red gleam over the far-spreading Pacific, leaving the sky of a leaden colour, moonless and starless. As the hour of midnight approaches, it assumes the hue predicted by Rocas, and desired by Diaz. For the ocean fog has again rolled shoreward across the peninsula, and shrouds San Francisco as with a pall. The adjacent country is covered with its funeral curtain, embracing within its folds the house of Don Gregorio Montijo. The inmates seem all asleep, as at this hour they should. No light is seen through the windows, nor any sound heard within the walls. Not even the bark of a dog, the bellow of a stalled ox, or the stamping of a horse in the stables. Inside, as without, all is silence. The profound silence seems strange, though favourable, to four men not far from the house, and gradually, but with slow steps, drawing nearer to it. For they are approaching by stealth, as can be told by their attitudes and gestures. They advance crouching, now and then stopping to take a survey of the *terrain* in front, as they do so exchanging whispered speech with one another.

Through the hazy atmosphere their figures shew weird-like—all the more from their grotesque gesticulation. Scrutinised closely and in a clear light they would still present this appearance, for although in human shape, and wearing the garb of men, their faces more resemble those of demons. They are human countenances, nevertheless, but craped—*enmascaradas*. Nothing more is needed to tell who and what they are, with their purpose in thus approaching Don Gregorio's dwelling. They are burglars, designing to break it.

It needs not the removal of their masks to iden-

tify them as the four conspirators left plotting in the ranche of Rafael Rocas.

They are now *en route* for putting their scheme into execution.

It would look as if Don Gregorio were never to get his gold to Panama—much less have it transported to Spain.

And his daughter! What of her, with Francisco de Lara drawing nigh as one of the nocturnal ravagers? His granddaughter, too, Faustino Calderon being another?

One cognisant of the existing relations, and spectator of what is passing now—seeing the craped robbers as they steal on towards the house—would suppose it in danger of being doubly despoiled, and that its owner is to suffer desolation, not only in fortune, but in that far dearer to him—his family.

The burglars are approaching from the front, up the avenue, though not on it. They keep along its edge among the manzanita bushes. These, with the fog, afford sufficient screen to prevent their being observed from the house—even though sentinels were set upon its azotea. But there appears to be none; no eye to see, no voice to give warning, not even the bark of a watch-dog to wake those unconsciously slumbering within.

As already said, there is something strange in this. On a large grazing estate it is rare for the Molossian to be silent. More usually his sonorous bay is heard sounding throughout the night, or at short intervals. Though anything but desirous to hear the barking of dogs, the burglars are nevertheless puzzled at the universal silence, so long continued. For before entering the inclosure, they have been lying concealed in a thicket outside, their horses tied to the trees where they have left them, and during all the time not a sound has reached them; not a voice either of man or animal! They are now within sight of the house, its massive front looming large and dark through the mist—still no sound outside, and within the stillness of death itself!

Along with astonishment, a sense of awe is felt by one of the four criminals—Calderon, who has still some lingering reluctance as to the deed about to be done—or it may be but fear. The other three are too strong in courage, and too hardened in crime, for scruples of any kind.

Arriving at the end of the avenue, and within a short distance of the dwelling, they stop for a final consultation, still screened by a clump of manzanitas. All silent as ever; no one stirring; no light from any window; the shutters closed behind the *rejas*—the great *puerta* as well.

'Now about getting inside,' says De Lara; 'what will be our best way?'

'In my opinion,' answers Diaz, 'we'll do best by climbing up to the *azotea*, and over it into the *patio*.'

'Where's your ladder?' asks Rocas, in his gruff blunt way.

'We must find one, or something that'll serve instead. There should be loose timber lying about the *corrales*—enough to provide us with a climbing-pole.'

'And while searching for it, wake up some of the *vaqueros*. That won't do.'

'Then what do you propose, Rafael?' interrogates De Lara.

The seal-hunter, with his presumed experience in housebreaking, is listened to with attention.

'Walk straight up to the door,' he answers; 'knock, and ask to be admitted.'

'Ay; and have a blunderbuss fired at us, with a shower of bullets big as billiard-balls. *Carrai!*' It is Calderon who speaks thus apprehensively.

'Not the least danger of that,' rejoins Rocas. 'Take my word, we'll be let in.'

'Why do you think so?'

'Why? Because we have a claim on the hospitality of the house.'

'I don't understand you, Rocas,' says De Lara.

'Haven't we a good story to tell—simple, and to the purpose?'

'Still, I don't understand. Explain yourself, Rafael.'

'Don't we come as messengers from the man-of-war—from those officers you've been telling me about?'

'Ah; now I perceive your drift.'

'One can so announce himself, while the others keep out of sight. He can say he's been sent by the young gentlemen on an errand to Don Gregorio, or the *señoritas*, if you like. Something of importance affecting their departure. True, by this they'll know the ship's weighed anchor. No matter; the story of a message will stand good all the same.'

'Rafael Rocas!' exclaims De Lara, 'you're a born genius. Instead of being forced to do a little smuggling now and then, you ought to be made *administrator-general of customs*. We shall act as you advise. No doubt the door will be opened. When it is, one can take charge of the janitor. He's a sexagenarian, and won't be hard to hold. If he struggle, let him be silenced. The rest of us can go ransacking. You, Calderon, are acquainted with the interior, and, as you say, know the room where Don Gregorio is most likely to keep his chest. You must lead us straight for that.'

'But, Francisco,' whispers Calderon in the ear of his confederate, after drawing him a little apart from the other two; 'about the *niñas*? You don't intend anything with them?'

'Certainly not—not to-night; nor in this fashion. I hope being able to approach them in gentler guise, and more becoming time. When they're without a *peso* in the world, they'll be less proud; and may be contented to stay a little longer in California. To-night we've enough on our hands without that. One thing at a time—their money first, themselves afterwards.'

'But suppose they should recognise us?'

'They can't. Disguised as we are, I defy a man's mother to know him. If they did, then—'

'Then what?'

'No use reflecting what. Don't be so scared, man! If I'd anticipated any chance of its coming to extremes of the kind you're thinking about, I wouldn't be here prepared for only half-measures. Perhaps we shan't even wake the ladies up; and if we do, there's not the slightest danger of our being known. So make your mind easy, and let's get through with it. See! Diaz and Rocas are getting impatient! We must rejoin them, and proceed to business at once.'

The four housebreakers again set their heads together; and after a few whispered words, to

complete their plan of proceeding, advance towards the door. Once up to it, they stand close in, concealed by its overshadowing arch.

With the butt of his pistol, De Lara knocks.

Diaz, unknown to the family, and therefore without fear of his voice being recognised, is to do the talking.

No one answers the knock; and it is repeated. Louder, and still louder. The sexagenarian janitor sleeps soundly to-night, thinks De Lara, deeming it strange. Another 'rat-at-ta' with the pistol-butt, followed by the usual formula: '*Ámbre la puerta!*' (Open the door). At length comes a response from within; but not the customary '*¿Quien es?*' (Who's there), nor anything in Spanish. On the contrary, the speech which salutes the ears of those seeking admission is in a different tongue, and tone altogether unlike that of a native Californian.

'Who the old scratch are ye?' asks a voice from inside, while a heavy footstep is heard coming along the *saguan*. Before the startled burglars can shape a reply, the voice continues: 'Darn ye! what d'ye want anyhow—wakin' a fellur out o' his sleep at this time o' the night? 'Twould serve ye right if I sent a bullet through the door at ye. Take care what you're about. I've got my shootin-iron handy; an' a Colt's revolver it air.'

'*Por Dios!* what does this mean?' mutters De Lara.

'Tell him, Diaz,' he adds, in *sotto-voce* to the cock-fighter—'tell him we're from the British man-of-war with—' *Carrai!* I forgot, you don't speak English. I must do it myself. He won't know who it is.' Then raising his voice: 'We want to see Don Gregorio Montijo. We bring a message from the ship *Crusader*—from the two officers.'

'Consarn the ship *Croozader*, an' yur message, an' yur two officers, I know nothin' 'bout them. As for Don Gregorio, if ye want to get sight on him, ye're a preeshus way wide o' the mark. He arn't here any more. He's gin up the house, yesterday, an' tuk everything o' hisn out o't. I'm only here in charge o' the place. Guess you'll find both the Don an' his darters at the *Parker*—the most likeliest place to tree thet lot.'

Don Gregorio gone!—his gold—his girls! Only an empty house, in charge of a care-taker, who carries a Colt's repeating pistol, and would use it on the slightest provocation! No good going inside now, but a deal of danger. Anything but pleasant medicine would be a pill from that six-shooter.

Many are the wild exclamations that issue from the lips of the disappointed housebreakers, as they turn away from Don Gregorio's dismantled dwelling, and hasten to regain their horses.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—A SCRATCH CREW.

It was a fortunate inspiration that led the ex-haciendado to have his gold secretly carried on board the Chilian ship; another, that influenced him to transfer his family and household gods to an hotel in the town.

It was all done in a day—that same day. Every hour, after the sailing of the *Crusader*, had he become more anxious; for every hour brought intelligence of some new act of outlawry in the neighbourhood, impressing him with the insecurity,

not only of his Penates, but of the lives of himself and the young ladies. So long as the British ship lay in port, it seemed a protection to him; and although this may have been but fancy, it served somewhat to tranquillise his fears. Soon as she was gone, he gave way to them, summoned Silvestre, with a numerous retinue of *cargadores*, and swept the house clean of everything he intended taking—the furniture alone being left, as part of the purchased effects. It is a company of speculators to whom he has sold the property, these designing to cut it up into town-lots and suburban villa-sites.

He has reason to congratulate himself on his rapid removal, as he finds on the following day, when visiting his old home for some trifling purpose, and there hearing what had happened during the night. The man in charge—a stalwart American, armed to the teeth—gives him a full account of the nocturnal visitors. There were four, he says—having counted them through the keyhole of the door—inquiring for him, Don Gregorio. They appeared greatly disappointed at not getting an interview with him; and went off uttering adjurations in Spanish, though having held their parley in plain English.

A message from the British man-of-war! and brought by men who swore in Spanish! Strange all that, thinks Don Gregorio, knowing the *Crusader* should then be at least a hundred leagues off at sea. Besides, the messengers have not presented themselves at the *Parker House*, to which the care-taker had directed them. 'What could it mean?' asks the ex-haciendado of himself. Perhaps the sailor who is now first-officer of the Chilean ship may know something of it; and he will question him next time he goes aboard. He has, however, but little hope of being enlightened in that quarter; his suspicions turning elsewhere. He cannot help connecting Messrs De Lara and Calderon with the occurrence. Crozier's letter, coupled with further information received from the bearer of it, has thrown such a light on the character of these two individuals, that he can believe them capable of anything. After their attempt to rob the young officers, and murder them as well, they would not hesitate to serve others the same; and the demand for admission to his house may have been made by these very men, with a couple of confederates—their design to plunder it, if not worse.

Thus reflecting, he is thankful for having so unconsciously foiled them—indeed, deeming it a providence. Still is he all the more solicitous to leave a land beset with such dangers. Even in the town he does not feel safe. Robbers and murderers walk boldly abroad through the streets; not alone, but in the company of judges who have tried without condemning them; while lesser criminals stand by drinking-bars, hobnobbing with the constables who either hold them in charge, or have just released them after a mock-hearing before some magistrate, with eyes blind as those of Justice herself—blinded by the gold-dust of California!

Notwithstanding all this, Don Gregorio need have no fear for his ladies. Their sojourn at the hotel may be somewhat irksome and uncongenial, still are they safe. Rough-looking and boisterous as are some of their fellow-guests, they are yet in no way rude. The most sensitive lady need not fear

moving in their midst. A word or gesture of insult to her would call forth instant resentment.

It is not on their account he continues anxious, but because of his unprotected treasure. Though secreted aboard the *Condor*, it is still unsafe. Should its whereabouts get whispered abroad, there are robbers bold enough, not only to take it from the Chilean skipper, but set fire to his ship, himself in her, and cover their crime by burning everything up. Aware of this, Don Gregorio, with the help of friendly Silvestre, has half-a-dozen trusty men placed aboard of her—there to stay till a crew can be engaged. It is a costly matter, but money may save money, and now is not the time to cavil at expenses.

As yet, not a sailor has presented himself. None seems caring to ship 'for Valparaiso and intermediate ports,' even at the double wages offered in the advertisement. The *Condor's* fore-castle remains untenanted, except by the six long-shore men, who temporarily occupy it, without exactly knowing why they are there; but contented to make no inquiry so long as they are receiving their ten dollars a day. Of crew, there is only the captain himself, his first-officer, and the cook. The oranges do not count.

Day by day, Don Gregorio grows more impatient, and is in constant communication with Silvestre. 'Offer higher wages,' he says; 'engage sailors at any price.' The ship-agent yields assent; inserts a second *aviso* in the Spanish paper, addressed to '*marineros* of all nations.' Triple wages to those who will take service on a well-appointed ship. In addition, all the usual allowances, the best of grub and grog. Surely this should get the *Condor* a crew.

And at length it does. Within twenty-four hours after the advertisement has appeared, sailors begin to shew on her deck. They come singly, or in twos and threes; and keep coming till as many as half a score have presented themselves. They belong to different nationalities, speaking several tongues—among them English, French, and Danish. But the majority appear to be Spaniards, or Spanish-Americans, as might have been expected from the *Condor* being a Chilean ship. Among them is the usual variety of facial expression, though, in one respect, a wonderful uniformity. Scarce a man of them whose countenance is not in some way unprepossessing—either naturally of sinister cast, or brought to it by a career of sinful dissipation. Several of them shew signs of having been recently drinking—in eyes bleary and bloodshot. Of strife, too, by other eyes that are blackened, with scars upon their cheeks not yet cicatrised. Some are still in a state of inebriety, and stagger as they stray about the decks.

Under any other circumstances, such sailors would stand no chance of getting shipped. As it is, they are accepted—not one refused. Captain Lantanas has no choice, and knows it. Without them he is helpless, and it would be hopeless for him to think of putting to sea. If he do not take them, the *Condor* may swing idly at her anchor for weeks, it might be months. Quick as they come aboard, he enters their names on the ship's books, while Harry Blew assigns them their separate bunks in the fore-peak. One, a Spaniard, by name Padilla, shews credentials from some former ship that procure for him the berth of *piloto segundo* (second-mate).

After the ten have been taken, no more present themselves. Even the big bounty offered does not tempt another tar from the saloons of San Francisco. In any other seaport, it would empty every sailors' boarding-house to its last lodger. Still ten hands are not enough to work the good ship *Condor*. Her captain knows it, and waits another day, hoping he may get a few more to complete her complement. He hopes in vain; the supply seems exhausted. Becoming convinced of this, he determines to set sail with such crew as he has secured. But little more remains to be done; some stores to be shipped, provisions for the voyage, the best and freshest San Francisco can afford. For he who authorises their inlay cares not for the cost—only that things may be made comfortable. Don Gregorio gives *carte-blanche* for providing the vessel; and it is done according to his directions. At length everything is ready, and the *Condor* only awaits her passengers. Her cabin has been handsomely furnished; its best state-room decorated to receive two ladies, fair as ever set foot on board a ship.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—'ADIOS, CALIFORNIA!'

Another sunrise over San Francisco, in all likelihood the last Don Gregorio Montijo will ever witness in California. For just as the orb of day shews its disc above the dome-shaped *silhouette* of Monté Diablo, flinging its golden shimmer across the bay, a boat leaves the town-pier, bearing him and his towards the Chilian vessel, whose signals for sailing are out. Others are in the boat; a large party of ladies and gentlemen, who accompany them to do a last hand-shaking on board the ship. For, in quitting California, the ex-haciendado leaves many friends behind; among them, some who will pass sleepless hours thinking of Carmen Montijo; and others whose hearts will be sore as their thoughts turn to Inez Alvarez. It may be that none of these is in the boat, and better for them if they are not; since the most painful of all partings is that where the lover sees his sweetheart sail away, with the knowledge she cares neither to stay, nor come back.

The two young girls going off shew but little sign of regret at leaving. They are hindered by remembrance of the last words spoken at another parting, now painfully recalled: 'Hasta Cadiz!' The thought of that takes the sting out of this.

The boat reaches the ship, and swinging around, lies alongside. Captain Lantanas stands by the gangway to receive his passengers, with their friends; while his first-officer helps them up the man-ropes.

Among the ladies, Harry Blew distinguishes the two he is to have charge of, and with them is specially careful. As their soft gloved fingers rest in his rough horny hand, he mentally registers a vow, that it shall never fail them in the hour of need—if such there ever be.

On the cabin-table is spread a repast of the best; and around it the leave-takers assemble, the Chilian skipper doing the honours of his ship. And gracefully, for he is in truth a gentleman.

Half-an-hour of merry-making, light chatter, enlivened by the popping of corks and clinking of glasses; then ten minutes of converse more serious; after which, hurried graspings of the hand, and a general scattering towards the shore-boat;

which soon after moves off amid exclamations of 'Adios!' and 'Bueno viaje!' accompanied by the waving of hands, and white slender fingers saluting, with tremulous motion, like the quiver of a kestrel's wing—the fashion of the Spanish-American fair.

While the boat is being rowed back to the shore, the *Condor* spreads sail, and stands away towards the Golden Gate.

She is soon out of sight of the port, having entered the strait which gives access to the great landlocked estuary. But a wind blowing in from the west hinders her; and she is all the day tacking through the eight miles of narrow water which connect San Francisco Bay with the Pacific.

The sun is high set as she passes the old Spanish fort, and opens view of the outside ocean. But the heavenly orb that rose over Monté Diablo like a globe of gold, goes down beyond 'Los Farallones' more resembling a ball of fire about to be quenched in the sea.

It is still only half-immersed in the blue liquid expanse, when, gliding out from the portals of the Golden Gate, the *Condor* rounds Seal Rock, and stands on her course W.S.W.

The wind has shifted, the evening breeze beginning to blow steadily from the land. This is favourable; and after tacks have been set, and sails sheeted home, there is but little work to be done.

As it is the hour of the second dog-watch, the sailors are all on deck, grouped about the fore hatch, and gleefully conversing. Here and there an odd individual stands by the side, with eyes turned shoreward, taking a last look at the land. Not as if he regretted leaving it, but is rather glad to get away. More than one of the *Condor's* crew have reason to feel thankful that the Chilian craft is carrying them from a country, where, had they stayed much longer, it would have been to find lodgment in a jail. Out at sea, their faces seem no better favoured than when they first stepped aboard. Scarce recovered from their shore carousing, they shew swollen cheeks, and eyes inflamed with alcohol; countenances from which the breeze of the Pacific, however pure, cannot remove that sinister expression.

At sight of them, and the two fair creatures sailing in the same ship, a thought about the incongruity—as also the insecurity of such companionship—cannot help coming uppermost. It is like two beautiful birds of paradise shut up in the same cage with half a score of wolves, tigers, and hyenas.

But the birds of paradise are not troubling themselves about this, or anything else in the ship. Lingered abaft the binnacle, with their hands resting on the taffrail, they look back at the land, their eyes fixed upon the summit of a hill, ere long to become lost to their view by the setting of the sun. They have been standing so for some time in silence, when Inez says: 'I can tell what you're thinking of, *tía*.'

'Indeed! can you? Well; let me hear it.'

'You're saying to yourself: "What a beautiful hill that is yonder; and how I should like to be once more upon its top—not alone, but with somebody beside me." Now, tell the truth, isn't that it?'

'Those are your own thoughts, *sobrina*.'

'I admit it, and also that they are pleasant. They are yours also; are they not?'

'Only in part. I have others, which I suppose you can share with me.'

'What others?'

'Reflections not at all agreeable, but quite the contrary.'

'Again distressing yourself about that! It does not give me any concern; and didn't from the first.'

'No?'

'No!'

'Well; I must say you take things easily—which I don't. A lover—engaged too—to go away in that *sans façon* manner! Not so much as a note, nor even a verbal message. *Santísima!* it was something more than rude—it was cruel; and I can't help thinking so.'

'But there was a message in the letter to grandpapa, for both of us. What more would you wish?'

'Pff! who cares for parting compliments? A *lepero* would send better to his sweetheart in sleeveless *camisa*. That's not the message for me.'

'How can you tell there wasn't some other which has miscarried? I'm almost sure there has been; else why should somebody have knocked at the door, and said so. The Americano left in charge of the house has told grandpapa something about four men having come there the night after we left it. One may have been the messenger, the others going with him for company; and through his neglect, we've not got letters intended for us. Or, if they haven't written, it's because they were pressed for time. However, we shall know when we meet them at Cadiz.'

'Ah! when we meet them there, I'll demand an explanation from Eduardo. That shall I, and get it—or know the reason why.'

'He will give a good one, I warrant. There's been a miscarriage somehow. For hasn't there been mystery all round. Luckily, no fighting, as we feared, and have reason to rejoice. Neither anything seen or heard of your Californian chivalry! That's the strangest thing of all.'

'It is indeed strange,' rejoins Carmen, shewing emotion; 'I wonder what became of them. Nobody that we know has met either after that day, nor yet heard word of them.'

'Carmen, I believe one has heard of them.'

'Who?'

'Your father.'

'What makes you think so, Inez?'

'Some words I overheard while he was conversing with the English sailor who's now in the ship with us. I'm almost certain there was something in Mr Crozier's letter that related to De Lara and Calderon. What it was, grandpapa seems desirous of keeping to himself, else he would have told us. We must endeavour to find it out from the sailor.'

'You're a cunning schemer, *sobrina*. I should never have thought of that. We shall try. Now I remember, Eduardo once saved this man's life. Wasn't it a noble daring deed? For all, I'm mad angry with him leaving me as he did; and shan't be pacified till he get upon his knees, and apologise for it. That he shall do at Cadiz.'

'To confess the truth, *tía*, I was a little spited myself at first. On reflection, I feel sure there's been some mischance, and we've been wronging them both. I shan't blame my darling till I see

him again. Then if he can't clear himself, oh, won't I?'

'You forgive too easily. I can't.'

'Yes, you can. Look at yonder hill. Recall the pleasant hour passed upon it, and you'll be lenient, as I am.'

Carmen obeys, and again turns her glance toward the spot sacred to sweet memories.

As she continues to gaze at it, the cloud lifts from her brow, replaced by a smile, that promises easy pardon to him who has offended her.

In silence the two stand, straining their eyes upon the far summit, till shore and sea become one—both blending into the purple of twilight.

'Adios, California!'

Land no longer in sight. The ship is *au large* on the ocean.

CHEAP RAILWAY TRAVELLING.

PRODIGIOUS as were the advantages secured by railway travelling, cheapness was not at first a matter of serious consideration. Accommodation for what are called the masses did not enter into the calculations of the railway companies; perhaps because the masses had never yet shewn any disposition or ability to travel. In short, third-class travelling by rail came laggingly into use. Some companies refused to adopt it in any form; while others bent to it only when temporary or local competition appeared. When parliament insisted that, once a day at anyrate, passengers should be afforded the means of travelling at a penny a mile, in closed carriages, the companies obeyed the law grudgingly; they started their 'parliamentary trains' (as they were called) at inconvenient hours, adopted a tediously slow rate of speed, and shunted the train repeatedly, to allow the passage of faster trains. All this was most unbusiness-like, and proved disadvantageous to everybody, the shareholders of railway companies included. The error consisted in a real belief that third-class fares, and low fares generally, involved a grievous diminution of the companies' net profits, and should, if possible, be discouraged. Competition was the agency which taught railway directors better; not reckless competition at ridiculously low fares, to be followed by a return to high fares when the cabals and quarrels between the companies had subsided; but a reduction to be steadily maintained on two lines which accommodated two or more stations by different routes. It was a truth only gradually recognised by directors, that cheap fares *create* traffic, by tempting those to travel by rail who before did not travel at all; by tempting those to travel frequently who, previously, had made but few trips in the course of a year; and (in regard to merchandise) to encourage swift transit by rail, instead of slow transit by road or canal.

How the system has advanced in these characteristics, is known in a general way to most persons. Railway directors are not one whit more benevolent now than they were twenty or thirty years ago; but they are more experienced, and give a practical turn to the experience they have acquired. They have discovered that penny-a-milers are a very important set of customers, who are by no means to be pooh-poohed. This fact was recognised in a striking way by the Midland directors, two or three years ago, when they commenced the system of carrying third-class passengers by every

train, fast as well as slow, and over every part of their widely stretching network of railways. The other companies were much troubled by this innovation, which placed them on the horns of a dilemma: if they followed the example set to them, they apprehended a loss of receipts, by carrying the bulk of their passengers at third-class instead of second-class fares; if they did not follow the example, a probability arose that the daring innovator would take the leading place in the estimation of the public. This twofold perplexity has led to curious results in the diversity of plans adopted, as will be seen at the end of this paper.

The latest Report on these matters, presented by Captain Tyler to the Board of Trade, is full of interest, in relation to the proceedings down to the end of 1873. We pass over his marvellous details concerning our railway system, now extending over upwards of 16,082 miles, and costing, all things included, the stupendous sum of very nearly six hundred millions of pounds sterling. The point we direct attention to is the expansion of third-class accommodation on the lines generally, but, in particular, as regards the Midland Railway—so called because it lies midway from north to south between the Great Northern and the London and North-western. 'During a portion of 1872 and during 1873, the experiment of conveying third-class passengers in fast trains, initiated by the Midland Railway Company, and carried out in a great measure by the other principal companies, who felt compelled more or less to adopt a similar course, has now been more fully tried. The results of that experiment, not only upon the third-class traffic, but also upon the traffic of the other classes, are apparent. Different companies have no doubt been affected by it in different degrees; and it is a question how far the increase in the numbers and receipts from third-class passengers is altogether due to the greater facilities for fast travelling thus conferred upon them. Other causes which may be considered to have been in operation, with reference to the agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial prosperity of the country during the periods referred to, must also be borne in mind; but the general results of the experiment must be considered to be the desertion to a considerable extent of second-class for third-class carriages. The continued increase of first-class traffic tends to the conviction, that passengers desiring or requiring first-class accommodation do not object to the existing first-class fares. The decrease of second-class traffic indicates that the fares are too high for the advantages or accommodation afforded, relatively to the other classes; and, consequently, that the second-class fares might advantageously be reduced. The increase in the third-class traffic is encouraging, as shewing still further than in former years the elasticity and importance of that traffic. On the other hand, the experiment of conveying third-class passengers by fast non-stopping trains, as partially adopted, does not seem to have been entirely satisfactory, either to the railway companies generally, or to the passengers of higher classes travelling by express trains; as leading, where duplicate trains have not been run, to overcrowding, unpunctuality, and other inconveniences.'

Two passages in Captain Tyler's remarks have a bearing on the Midland Company's next bold venture, which was put in force on New-year's

Day 1875. The general result of the change made in 1872, that of greatly increasing the third-class accommodation, has been 'the desertion to a considerable extent of second-class for third-class carriages.' This is precisely what the Midland directors say; the second-class carriages certainly are very much deserted, and a great weight of wood and iron has to be dragged along, with very few passengers to pay for the haulage. The companies carried 81,000,000 second-class passengers in 1871, but only 70,000,000 in 1873, notwithstanding the great increase in railway travelling generally in the two years; there were nearly as many second-class carriages employed, but eleven million fewer passengers in them. This is the reason assigned by the Midland for abolishing second-class altogether. A second remark is: 'The continued increase of first-class traffic tends to the conviction, that passengers desiring or requiring first-class accommodation do not object to the existing first-class fares.' This goes against the Midland scheme, and so far supports the protest made by the other companies; they all assert that first-class passengers do not object to twopence per mile for well-appointed carriages in fast trains; and that it is a gratuitous throwing away of money to carry well-to-do passengers at three-halfpence per mile. A further comment by Captain Tyler relates to the overcrowding and unpunctuality which result (or may result) from a great predominance of third-class travelling, and which would be distasteful to those who have paid first-class fares. This evil, we presume, could be obviated by providing a sufficiency of carriages, and a sufficient staff of active servants at the principal stations.

Matters will probably turn out thus: Those who have hitherto travelled first-class will continue so to do, and will benefit by any reduction of fare. Those who have hitherto travelled third-class will in like manner continue so to do, but with no material reduction of fare. Those who have hitherto travelled second-class will divide off into two parties, the minority going up to the first, the majority going down to the third. How the first-class folk will like to see the middle class come among them, remains to be seen; a curious subject is this of caste or social class, concerning which the companies can do no more than feel their way by degrees. For those who desire to be particularly exclusive, it would not be difficult to have a few *coupés* set apart at a higher charge per mile. The great object to be achieved is to lessen the number of empty or half-empty carriages that are dragged along uselessly with many of the trains.

The total effect of the new system cannot yet be estimated. The several companies have followed the lead of the Midland still more unwillingly and incompletely than in the former movement. The reduction of first-class fares from twopence to three-halfpence per mile is greatly disliked by them, as a gratuitous sacrifice of revenue; and it certainly is the case that very few first-class passengers have been in the habit of complaining of the rate hitherto adopted. Uniformity of system is quite destroyed just at present; 'chaos' may become 'cosmos' by degrees; but chaos assuredly reigns in the meantime. Very few of the companies adopt the Midland new system in full—namely, first-class at three-halfpence, *plus* third-class at a penny. Some adopt the two classes only, but make the first-class a little over three-halfpence, or the third-class

(except a few parliamentary trains) a little over a penny. Some have three classes, but charge only five farthings per mile for the second. Some adopt the Midland tariff between such stations only as are subject to competition, but charge the old fares on all other parts of their line. Lastly, some resolutely set their face against the whole innovation, and retain the three classes and the former rates of fare.

Since the above was written, the principal railway companies have reported on the traffic for the first half of the year 1875. The results, so far as they relate to recent changes, we now proceed to give.

The *Midland*, abandoning second-class traffic, carried fewer first-class passengers in the first half of 1875, than first and second class in the corresponding half of 1874; but this deficiency was more than made up by the increase in third-class. As a total, 840,000 more passengers were carried, and £50,000 more money taken in fares—an increase due in great part, however, to the opening of new portions of line. The average receipts per mile have remained nearly unchanged; the directors claim to have greatly benefited the public, without loss to the company.

The *London and North-western* 'have had to modify the first-class fares, in consequence of the Midland competition; but they have continued to run three classes of carriages, and experience convinces them that they are justified in this policy.' They have carried 100,000 more first-class passengers, and 254,000 more second-class; but as the fares have been lessened, the total money receipts have undergone no increase. The third-class remains nearly stationary, attributed to the migration of third-class into (cheap) second. The directors, without loudly complaining, are dissatisfied with the Midland policy.

The *Great Northern* carried 1,200,000 more third-class, and 180,000 more first-class passengers; but as there was a decline in the second, and as both first and second class fares have been lowered, the gross passenger receipts are only augmented by £12,000—barely equivalent to the length of new line opened. What the directors most regret is, having to lessen the first-class fare in order to keep on equal terms with the Midland.

The *Great Eastern* have adopted the strange course of charging three-halfpence per mile for third class (except by parliamentary trains), thus nullifying the value of the boon of 'third-class by every train;' and as the first and second class fares are also high (except where they compete with their neighbours), the public have little cause to be grateful to this company.

The *Great Western* have not lowered their fares, except to a few competing stations, nor put on third-class by every train. Third-class trains are, however, increased in number, with the result of inducing many second-class folk to travel by third—a tendency against which the directors complain strongly. They are 'quite satisfied that the Midland did wrong in abolishing second-class, and feel convinced that time will shew this to be the case.'

The *Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire* are perplexed and in doubt how far to imitate their bold neighbour, the Midland. The abolition of second-class, and the lessening of first-class fares to competing stations, have been followed by a dimi-

nution of receipts from passenger traffic, notwithstanding the opening of new portions of line.

The *Lancashire and Yorkshire*, 'after much consideration, have resolved not to imitate the Midland in abolishing second-class.' The directors note an increase in the number of passengers by that class, greater than in the number by first or by third, consequent probably on a slight lowering of fares; and third-class tickets are extensively issued throughout the day, though not by every train.

The *North-eastern*, *North British*, *Caledonian*, *Glasgow and South-western*, and other companies in the north, have made but little change in these matters, except at points where competition arises, or where through-tickets necessitate an equality of system with other companies. In other words, they have not been so immediately pressed upon by the Midland. When this last-named company opens for passenger traffic the new line from Settle to Carlisle next spring, we shall probably see considerable modifications in the details of Scotch traffic, to the advantage of the public.

The four principal companies south of the Thames, like the Scotch companies, have made fewer changes than those in the central parts of England. The *London and South-western* refuse to lower the first-class fares, and equally refuse to abandon second-class; they slightly increase the third-class accommodation, and report an augmentation of traffic. Nearly the same thing has occurred on the *Brighton*, the *Chatham and Dover*, and the *South-eastern*; the companies appear to gain rather than lose by moderately cultivating third-class traffic, but do not relish any lowering of fares by the other two classes. It is not certain how much of the additional traffic is due to the opening of new portions of line.

To sum up. It is evident from the above reports and comments, that the time has not yet come for estimating the full effects of the three great changes introduced by the Midland—the lowering of first-class fares, the abolition of second-class, and the carrying of third-class passengers by every train. The other companies speak reproachfully of the innovator; but it is left to the future to shew which are in the right. Meanwhile we may add a comment of our own. The advantages of *return tickets* have been curtailed by these changes; such tickets are still issued, but the Midland charge almost exactly double fares for them, and some of the other companies do the like. This is a withdrawal of advantages which lessens the interest of the public in the recent changes.

One word more. It appears to us that railway companies could do much for their own benefit, as well as for the encouragement of travellers, by issuing bundles of tickets to be used at convenience. In some parts of the United States, as we know by experience, railway tickets are sold in shops like any article of merchandise, and may be used at any time, by which arrangement people are not obliged to wait at crowded stations for the opening of wickets. Might not some plan of this kind be tried in England? We are aware that the North British Railway Company issues what are called 'Family or Guest Tickets.' Such tickets, however, are only issued to the holders of season-tickets. According to the official announcement, 'Holders of season-tickets to any station on the company's line to which the ordinary

first-class single-journey fare is three shillings or upwards, can purchase at one time six or more first-class return-tickets at a single fare and a quarter of the ordinary first-class fare, to be used by members of their families, or by guests visiting at their houses. These tickets are not transferable, and they must be used during the currency of the season-tickets in respect of which they have been issued. Application for such tickets is made by filling up a printed form. The same company have the further arrangement of issuing lots of not fewer than twenty first-class return-tickets, or a number equivalent, to the value of not less than L.5. But there is this restriction, that these tickets shall be used exclusively for the family and friends of the person whose name they bear. They must likewise be used consecutively, according to number, beginning at the lowest. There may be other companies which offer to sell tickets on a similarly wholesale plan, and possibly free from the foregoing restrictions, some of which seem to be only calculated to defeat the object aimed at. A broad intelligible method of issuing return-tickets in bundles to be used at any time by anybody, is the boon specially required.

SALVAGE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

IMAGINE London at three o'clock in the afternoon of a roasting day, the month August, and the aspect of Londoners savage.

Can a man be reasonably expected to feel amiable and benevolent who is obliged to remain in Town after the season is over? Every cab he sees bearing its happy freight to the stations, to be presently transferred to the seaside, seems, by some mocking and relentless fate, to bring to his parched and fevered senses a whiff of the salt sea-breeze, and to make him long the more for the unattainable; and it would appear as if the intense blinding heat, the pitiless scorching rays, had shrivelled up the heart of man, and dried the well-springs of his kindness and compassion. Wherefore at this hour stood the Honourable Denis Delmar, a youth of some twenty summers, on the steps of his father's mansion in Portland Place, and his face wore a sorrowful look and a gloomy. His father, Lord Delmar, had just refused the earnest suit of his only child, and, probably under the influence of the irritating weather, used strong language, and altogether conducted himself in a strictly parental, though decidedly annoying manner. Calling a hansom, the youth drove eastward, and stopping at the door of a used-up-looking house in Queen Square, Bloomsbury—that purlieu of decayed gentility and faded grandeur—discharged the cab, and entered the house. He made his way quickly up the staircase, and went into a drawing-room, where sat a young and beautiful girl; we say beautiful, for, though a heartless, critical old maid might have found fault with the irregularity of her features, yet the deep swimming brown eyes, and the bright ever-changeable expression of a happy face—a kaleidoscope of shifting humours, settling always into some new form of beauty—formed a picture, which, set as it was in a framework of wavy golden-brown hair, must have charmed every one else who saw her. No one could gaze on that fair fresh countenance and not admire; few could look on Alice Went-

wood, and not feel better for that look, and in her presence the moody brow of our hero that-is-to-be, relaxed.

'My little queen!' he said; and clasping her fairy form in his arms, he kissed her ardently, tenderly, and so long kept his lips pressed to hers, that she at last withdrew quickly, blushing from his glowing embrace; and the maid-servant, who, during its continuance, had been unable to withdraw her eye from the key-hole, caught a sad cold in that organ. Alice gazed for some time at the noble expressive countenance of her lover before speaking.

'Dear Denis, in the presence of their Queen, all the courtiers at least look amiable. You shall not frown so, dearest, but tell me what said and did Lord Delmar. Is he still inexorably deaf to your wishes. Speak to me, Den, and relieve my anxiety—there's a dear boy' (coaxingly).

'He said he would never consent to my marriage with—you. I said I would wed none but my darling; and he replied, that I might live a wealthy bachelor, or exist a wedded beggar.'

Alice Wentwood, *et*at nineteen, rose like a queen. 'Sir, it is as I feared, but your father's wishes shall be respected. *I will never marry you, without Lord Delmar's consent.* Heaven forbid that the one who loves you most truly, should be the one to cause your ruin! Leave me, Denis Delmar—leave me now! Return to your father; acknowledge that you have acted wrongly and hastily in loving your social inferior. Marry; forget me; and—God—send—you—may—be—happier—and—more—fortunate—in—your—next choice.' Her voice quavered and died away at the last words.

Amazed, and somewhat indignant, at this unexpected tirade, Denis gave her one mute look of reproach, turned, and laid his hand on the door-handle.

'Good-bye, Alice' (sternly). Pause. 'Good-bye, Alice' (softly). Pause. 'Good-bye, Alice' (huskily). No reply. He could not see her face now; it was turned from him, but the head lower than before. Once more he spoke: 'Alice, love, will you send me from you thus?'

A moment's hush, then she answered: 'Denis Delmar, your father's curse would rest upon me if I separated you from him. My darling, I have loved you too well, to bring shame to your family in my own person; so, fare-thee-well, Denis; good-bye for ever.'

Her voice quavered very slightly, but its tone was unyielding. For his sake, she compelled herself to be outwardly calm. She knew that one look, one motion of her fair hand, even one sob, would bring him to her feet for ever for weal or woe; but her pride and love were stronger than her selfishness and affection (four things, by the way, which are often mistaken for each other). And still he stood there; it was so hard to leave his life behind him, and to go out from that room dead to love for ever.

Presently, she turned, and command was in her voice: 'For the last time, Denis Delmar—your suit unsanctioned by your father—I say to you, farewell, farewell.'

Slowly and dejectedly he turned, and threw on her one look of agony as she stood there queenly immovable; then, passing out of the death-chamber of his hopes, he bowed his head, and went from her.

Passing down the stairs hastily, as he left the house, he heard a bell ring violently, then voices calling, but, absorbed in his own grief, he took no notice of this circumstance, but pursued his way gloomily, and with a heart burning with conflicting emotions. Arrived at home, he sought his father, and requested his permission to take the yacht, and set out at once for a cruise which should extend for at least six months.

Long and earnestly the old lord gazed on his son's face. 'Denis,' said he, 'I see you have returned to your duty and a right sense of your position. Is it not so?'

Denis could not speak; he bowed his head.

The other continued: 'I am satisfied with you. Henceforward, we will treat this foolish infatuation as if it had never been. You may start at once, if you please; the yacht lies at her moorings at Dover. For six months, you shall be your own master. Come back then to me as the heir of our house should come—competent to support its dignity, and knowing what he owes to his parents.'

In three hours from that time, the Honourable Denis Delmar was seated in an express train, whirling down to the seaside; and the book resting on his knees bore the title, *Not Wisely, but too Well*.

We cannot expect our readers to feel any interest in a person to whom they have not been previously introduced; the laws and regulations of society compel us to have a voucher of the respectability of a brother or sister pilgrim, before we can socially recognise his or her existence. How often it happens that a (moral) rascal requires the good offices of another miscreant in order to make him personally known to a third and greater ruffian.

Present company always excepted.

'Let us atone for our neglect, and introduce Miss Wentwood—Mr Gentlereader. Mr Gentlereader, this is Miss Wentwood.'

After you have talked commonplaces, and exhausted the weather—that never-failing *ragoût* of conversational cooks—we buttonhole you, and, leading you into a snug corner, let you in behind the scenes.

Alice, at the time you first saw her, was living in the house of a Mr Graham, a solicitor, and the legal adviser of Lord Delmar. Here our heroine was kept in trust, for her guardian had been an old and valued friend of her father's from boyhood. Later on, in the same regiment he and Alice's father had fought as brother-officers side by side, until at last Major Wentwood, succumbing to jungle-fever, confided with his last breath the care of his idolised and only daughter to his friend, who, unable at that time to leave India, had sent her home to Mr Graham—who, he well knew, would be kind to the orphan girl—until he himself could follow her. Here it was, then, that Denis first saw her; and, charmed with her manner, sought daily her companionship, and soon found that the perfection and grace of her body were only equalled by the natural beauty of her mind.

Mr Graham lived on but a small income, and in an unostentatious manner. Alice had never known what her father's circumstances were; but she guessed that, with the exception of a small annuity left her by an aunt, she was entirely dependent upon her guardian. Her mother had been dead many years.

And now, having effected an introduction, let us resume our narrative.

When Denis, despairing, took his bitter farewell of his love, and, as he imagined, his happiness for ever, and left the house, a violent peal at the bell was heard; the servant, hastening to the room, was heard to call loudly for assistance, and Mrs Graham, who happened to be at home, rushed up the stairs, and there, to her infinite consternation, found Miss Wentworth prostrate on the floor. Nature had prevailed over pride, and she had fainted. Raising her in their arms, they bore her to the open window, and speedily restored her to consciousness, and, alas, to misery! Poor Alice; it was her first *affaire du cœur*, and there was fierce strife in her breast. Love had thrown down the gauntlet to Self, and Nature was revenging her half-brother.

Presently Mr Graham came home, and sedulously this old man set himself to console, comfort, and revive the drooping and despairing heart. 'Make haste and get strong again, and well, my darling,' he said, 'and to-morrow, or the next day, we will take you down to Dover. Do not let your heart be cast down, for a little voice has whispered to me that all will yet be well.'

For two days and nights it had blown 'great guns' on the coast; the wind came roaring and howling over the sea, and dashed the spray in cataracts over rock and land, and the unceasing roaring waves tumbled over each other in their eagerness to beat and lash the shore, in unavailing fury. The fishermen, boatmen, and other water-rats gathered in knots on the beach, and ever and anon turning their keen and anxious glance in that quarter where lay the 'Goodwins,' shook their heads, and talked of death and salvage in a breath. Much chance was there of the former, though but little of the latter, unless the gale quickly moderated; for though all the life-boats were out, yet the relentless waves would spare little of the unhappy bark that should once drift on to those awful sands—gates to the mariners' Eternity.

A small group of sailors was standing near the end of the pier, gazing out into the darkness with anxious faces, for just before nightfall a large ship had appeared in the offing, firing guns of distress, and signalling for assistance; but the gale had since then increased, and the men were anxiously discussing the chances of her weathering out the storm.

'God give the lads soft sea-beds, for they'll not rest on a dry one again, gin the wind keeps this way.'

The speaker, an old grayheaded man, bared his head; he was alone in the world, having recently lost his only son, by the capsizing of a boat in rounding the pier-head. An all-wise Providence had seen fit to take the one sheep away to the place where there are already so many; but it seemed so hard to this old man, who, nevertheless, bowed his head like a forest oak to the will of the Almighty, and went out to endeavour to avert that grief from other hearts, that he felt so keenly himself. As he finished speaking, a flash shone far out at sea; a moment's pause, and the report of a gun came booming across the waters; then swiftly a rocket ascended, and it seemed to the observers like a messenger sent up to heaven to implore aid for perishing humanity; a second, and it burst impotent, and was gone. Again all was darkness and despair.

'Volunteers to go out with me to that ship!'

The startled crowd turned; in their midst stood a young man; his frame was sturdy and well knit,

and his athletic form, albeit wearing a look of aristocratic languor, shewed great power and strength, dormant, perhaps, but still there. His teeth were set, and his brow wore a look of settled melancholy, only his eyes glittered and burned with a strange fire, as again he uttered the words: 'Who volunteers to save that ship?'

A grim smile was on the faces of those men, and one answered: 'None but madmen.'

But the old man regarded him attentively, and awaited his answer. It came.

'Madman or not, I am going out to that ship, and I call for six volunteers to accompany me. If we succeed, salvage will repay them. If we fail, their families shall not want.'

A silence fell on the group. Then the old man said: 'What boat wilt thou go in, lad?'

'The life-boat of my yacht,' came the reply; 'and I tell you, old man, that I have been with her in weather little better than this, and here I am.' Then turning to the crowd: 'Now, twenty pounds down to every man who goes to make up my crew.'

The old man ranged himself by his side: 'Life be nowt to me, now my boy is gone; mebbe I shall follow him the quicker. Sir, I thank you; I make one.'

Then two of the yacht's crew stepped out; brave young fellows were they, sturdy and strong, and their example moved the crowd; and one by one came six others, of whom three were quickly selected.

A woman's voice rose above the storm, clear and shrill: 'Who be you to command our sons and husbands?' it asked. 'Mayhap some ne'er-do-well that you throw away your life like this.'

He turned grandly to that excited crowd. 'That is true: to me, it is worth nothing; yet, if I die, a father will be childless, an earldom soon vacant, and a girl will'— He broke off suddenly, and turned away: 'Men, we must hasten!' said he.

The old man advanced, and took his hand respectfully, yet tenderly, and wringing it heartily, the volunteers and their noble skipper made short preparation, and manned the boat.

The wind whistled and roared over the deep; the manes of the 'white horses' were torn from them, and flung in the faces of the breathless crowd, drenching them with the salt spray; and through the waves and the storm, the tempest and the spray, with the driving scud above, and the sailors' grave beneath, out into the black night went that frail boat on its mission of mercy.

Fearful was the danger, and dire the peril of the yacht's brave little boat; oftentimes had they all but given up hope, but a merciful Providence watched their gallant efforts for the rescue of their fellow-creatures. All that awful night had they laboured on through the darkness, their course guided only by the signals of the unhappy ship. They had steered so as to intercept her, as she was fast dragging her anchors. The old man at the helm, and the youth in front of him, sweeping his oar through the water with mighty strokes, faced each other; and so they toiled on in that fearful tempest; old age and youth for once equal in the race for the grave, and working out, in one single grand action, a noble end. When at length they had reached the ship, weary and faint with their unequal conflict, they quitted their boat one by one as they had an opportunity, and called to him who had steered them so bravely and so well

through the raging waves; but no answer was returned. After infinite labour, the boat was hoisted to the ship's side, and there, in the stern, supported by the tiller, sat the old man, his head on his breast, his soul with his God. The brave spirit had flown to rejoin his boy, and the faithful heart had ceased to beat in the supreme moment of victory.

During the night, several of the ship's crew had been washed overboard in a tremendous squall, and the survivors were far too exhausted by their protracted struggle to work the ship. They had endeavoured, as a last resource, to anchor, but, as we have seen, the attempt was futile. It was just at the time they had resigned themselves to apparently inevitable destruction, that the encouraging shouts of the boat's crew reached their ears, and they saw, with frantic joy, a fresh chance of life. No sooner had Denis and his men boarded, than they set to work to clear away the wreck of the fallen rigging; and their example inspired the ship's crew to such an extent, that between them they managed to put the ship about and stand out to sea. They had scarcely lost the sound of the roaring breakers when the gale commenced to moderate; the wind changed; and about an hour before morning they were again enabled to make for the shore. All this is easy enough to read about, but it required no small amount of seamanship and hardihood to bring the vessel out from that fearful peril, 'a lee shore.' Truly, it is a fearful thing to fight in the darkness against raging seas and roaring winds; humanity seems so small, and God so great and near.

Throughout the night, the storm continued to rage; but about an hour before dawn, the wind lulled; the gale had blown itself out; the sea, however, still continued fearfully high, and broke in giant rollers on the beach.

With the first dawn of morning, the eyes of those on shore were strained to catch a glimpse of the ship. The morning was dull and misty, and for some time little could be seen of the sea to windward; but presently the sky became clearer, was streaked with silver; the hues deepened, the glorious sun shone out, and its first beams dispelling the mist, ushered in a cloudless day, such as is often seen after a great storm upon the coast. As the fog rose up, like the curtain from a stage, there, not half a mile from the land, lay the ship. She was partially dismantled, but steadily making her way into port with what sail she could carry. In less than an hour, she was lying under the lee of the pier.

Truly, nothing succeeds like success. The ship was saved. Denis and his plucky crew had succeeded; and mothers held up their babes to look at the hero. Had he failed, he would have been 'a murderer;' women would have cursed him who had robbed them of their supporters, and would have taught their children to execrate his memory. Arrived at the hotel, Denis called one of his crew, and directed him to pay the men the money promised, dividing the old man's share among them; moreover, he enrolled the three natives there and then on the books of the yacht, and shook hands with them, thanking them in a few brief but hearty words for their aid and bravery. Then the men cheered, and took their leave, and being seized upon by the population, with yells and acclamations, were borne in triumph to their own homes.

Denis had brought ashore an elderly companion, whom he conducted to his apartments, where he ordered breakfast and dry clothing; and then set himself modestly to refuse all thanks and praise from the other. No: his life was almost valueless to him; he had risked what was only of little worth; he deserved no praise, and would accept none. This was the way he talked. Then the other drew from him by degrees his whole story; and, by his kind and genial manner, thawed the ice in which the cold winds of adversity had inclosed his heart, and won him to relate how it came about that a young man—titled, rich, and handsome—should discover so early the nothingness of life and its earthly pleasures. He undertook to shew him the impossibility of existing without some object in the future. Youth is ever prone to confidences, and Denis felt a kindness for the man whose life he had saved, and so, to his kind and sympathising ear, he poured forth the longing utterances of his heart; and told his tale with a simple and manly dignity that won upon the heart of his attentive auditor, and when he had finished, the other spoke: 'Now that you have fulfilled my request, and proved to me that, being a gentleman yourself, you know another by intuition, I will return your confidence, my dear boy. The ship you saved by your noble action and example was bringing me from the East Indies, and had on board the proceeds of the sale of my estates there, mostly in specie and produce. You have thus, by your intrepid conduct, been the means of sparing me a great loss. And now, pray, remember, that as yet I am ignorant of the name of my preserver.'

'Men call me the Honourable Denis Delmar,' was the bitter reply.

'Denis Delmar!' exclaimed the other, as he sprang from his chair, which he grasped with a convulsed movement. Denis approached him in surprise; he feared he was about to fall. The old man regarded him steadfastly for a moment, then, with a look of unutterable love, he pressed the youth to his heart—fondly and passionately; then, tearing himself from his arms, he rushed from the room, his form agitated visibly by the emotion he strove so hard to conceal. To attempt to describe Denis's state by the word 'mystified,' is useless. He sat and stared at the door vacantly. Was there a curse in his name working always for evil? It had ruined the happiness of Alice and himself; and even now it was marring what satisfaction his own conscience felt at his late meritorious deed. Presently, an attendant entered the room, bearing a note. It ran thus:

DEAR FRIEND—Pardon the eccentricity of an old man, to whom life is yet so sweet that he sheds tears at the name of its saviour. My nerves were much shaken by the late events, and I felt overpowered by the sudden remembrance of all I owed to you. Pray, forgive me, and from this moment, I entreat you, look upon me as your friend for life, to which life I trust before long to reconcile you.

WILLIAM GIMP.

To the Honourable Denis Delmar.

Having read this through again, our hero felt very dissatisfied with the first part of it; there was a want of sincerity, he thought, about the old man's excuse for his emotion, although the explanation seemed reasonable enough. Meditating upon this, he rose from his chair, turned to the window,

and looked out listlessly into the street. Suddenly, he gave a cry of surprise. There, seated in a hired carriage passing the door, sat Alice, his Alice once, but oh! how changed in appearance. 'What suffering have I caused thee, my darling!' exclaimed, in anguish, the man who had pulled his car silently through the night of peril. 'God forgive me!' cried, in despair, he who had faced death, himself unmoved. Then moans of pain were wrung from this strange compound of strength and weakness, and in the agony of his grief, the insulter of death sank into a chair as he cried aloud: 'Alice, Alice! O my love, I thought I was not cared for!' He covered his face with his hands; the excitement of the past night over, reaction set in, and the hot tears trickled from between his fingers, though he hated himself for the weakness. Suddenly, he started up. 'I will see her again,' he urged passionately, 'be the consequences what they may. She is ill, and I am the cause; perhaps she will die. That shall not be. I go to save, at the expense of my word, two deaths from resting on my father's conscience. I will track her home. I will see her, and if she does love me, my father shall consent to our union.' The latter part of this grandiose speech was uttered to the winds, as Denis sped along after the carriage, which was still in sight; he followed it closely, saw it stop, and his darling assisted to alight; she entered a house, and the door closed. Allowing a reasonable time to elapse, he walked up to it, and knocking, told the servant who replied to his imperative summons, that a gentleman desired a few minutes' speech with Miss Wentwood on important business. He was shewn up to the drawing-room; the door opened to admit him, closed again, and once more he stood in the presence of Alice. One glance of recognition she gave, and then the room grew dark, the floor rose up, and she would have fallen, had he not sprung forward and supported her in his arms. As she felt his embrace, and his warm breath on her cheek, she slightly revived, and gently gliding from his arms, sank upon a couch.

THE PENITENT'S LIGHTHOUSE.

A LEGEND FROM THE FRENCH.

AT about three miles and a half to the west of Rochelle is situated a dirty and miserable village called Lalen. There are only a few fishermen there. The coast is barren and inhospitable. The sea shuts in its white belt of shingles, divided from place to place by immense rocks; and when it is stormy, you can hear the distant rumbling of the 'Mou de Monmusson,' an immense funnel, which sucks up the fishing-boats that approach too near it. At low-tide, the women go and pick up shells among the sea-wrack, whilst the men are busy in the fields. The fishermen are some of them stationed at St Martin de Ré; others at La Rochelle, that old Huguenot port, fortified by towers and ramparts. Along the coast are vast marshes, overgrown with mushrooms, and bordered by thyme. I started one morning in the month of September, before sunrise, with Captain Tailhades. We had spent the night at Portneuf, where Rear-admiral Bourd  had entertained us, and at dawn we had left his hospitable house, with our guns on our shoulders, our game-bags, and our pipes. The first rays of the sun dissipated the fog, and we saw the sparkling ocean. The islands of R  and

Oléron were visible on the horizon like two black spots, and some sloops were tacking about, their sails spread to enter La Rochelle. After five hours of a painful march, we found ourselves on the coast of La Repentie, which is the most barren part of that arid shore.

'Now,' said Tailhades, 'let us try to find out where we are. Here is the Saut du Bouc; the coast-guard's hut ought to be over there; and since we are the strongest, we will make a raid on that solitary official's breakfast. Did I not say so? Do you not see the curling smoke? Let us bear to the right; we shall get a breakfast in that direction.'

The coast-guard received us with open arms, and having given our dogs an immense basin of soup, we did honour to the promiscuous breakfast. If I spend so much time in bringing before my readers the legend of the 'Repentie,' it is that I thought it indispensable to transport them to the place where it was related to me; so that they may forgive its simplicity on account of its truth, for I did not invent it.

I will now let the coast-guard speak.

'Before they had built the two lighthouses which shine at night like two stars between Oléron and Ré, you might have seen, on the top of the Roche du Bouc, a post strengthened with iron clamps, and surmounted by an enormous lantern. Every evening the coast-guard lighted it, and the boats that came up to the rock turned away when they perceived the light. Worthy Rébard, whose age no one knows, has often told me about the coast-guard Kernan, who spent the greater part of his life contemplating the lantern, and people said he was in love with it. The lantern, at all events, was always bright and in good condition. In stormy weather, when the sky was black and thundery, when the broken shingles rolled like thunder, it was visible at the end of the post; and the sailors, who thanked Heaven when they had escaped the reefs, blessed Kernan a little in their hearts. He was the only one who loved and protected the lantern, for it had many enemies. All the wreckers on the coast hated it. Formerly, a storm was a good thing for them, and after a night of misery to those at sea, they snatched up all the riches that were thrown up on the coast. It was a devilish trade; but amidst the waifs there were often rich finds, and the lantern had ruined them. They had attempted to break the lantern and to throw down the post; but Kernan declared he would shoot any one he found attempting such a thing again. Amongst those the lantern had beggared was an old woman called La Mouette (the sea-gull), but nevertheless, she ought to have had pity upon others, for her son, a brave sailor, was at sea. He was twenty years old, and called Jack, whom every one in Lalen loved, because of his good heart.

'The season had been fine that year, and a number of the wreckers had gone inland to seek work. La Mouette blasphemed from morning till night, and one day, threatening the lantern, she said: "Infernal lantern, they have placed you there to ruin people; but that must be put an end to."

"You are very wicked, La Mouette," Kernan answered; "and God will punish you."

'It was at the time of the equinoctial gales. The sea found its bed too narrow. One night, the waves, like giants escaped from prison, rose up towards the sky; the wind howled like a guilty spirit; and

signals of distress were heard at sea. Kernan filled his lantern with the best oil he had, he put in a fresh wick, and when he saw the beneficent light shedding its rays round the rock, he went to bed, praying God for those who were in danger.

'La Mouette had watched his proceedings, and when he was gone, she climbed the rock in her turn. By dint of throwing stones, she had succeeded in breaking one of the sides of the lantern, so that the wind and rain rushed in and put out the light. At sea the signals of distress were redoubled, but at daybreak, Kernan, to his dismay, found his lantern broken.

'La Mouette on her side ran to the shore. It was covered with fragments of all kinds; but there were also some dead bodies. She ran from one to the other, pulling off the rings, turning out the pockets. But suddenly she grew pale; she stumbled, and then fell on her knees on the white stones. Her eyes were blood-shot; she turned one body over and over; she put her hand to the heart; she kissed it, crying like a mad woman, for she had recognised her son—her son Jack! She carried the body away, and brought it to her hut. There she wrapped it in warm linen, and called her boy by name, imploring him to answer her. After that day, she never left her cottage. She remained like a statue of Grief, seated night and day on a stone.

'Some kind neighbours gave her some food. The curé of Lalen came to see her; and she prayed and cried so much, that people came from miles round to see her. One morning—so they say—she was found dead on her stone. They wished to carry her away, but nobody could succeed. The water that dropped from the rock had petrified the old woman. She was there, sad and pale, like a statue of Grief. And as people had often bestowed money upon her, the curé of Lalen, according to La Mouette's wish, had another beacon put instead of Kernan's lantern. It is to this day called "The Penitent's Lighthouse."

LOVE'S WHISPER.

Go, heart of mine, and hasten to my Love;

Tell her I mourn throughout the slow, sad hours,

And that I wander through forsaken bowers

Like some disconsolate and widowed dove,

Who, being once forsaken of her mate,

Doth wander ever after desolate.

Go, heart of mine, and tremble in her breast;

Tell her that I am like the winds that scour

O'er hill and dale, that leafy woods deflower,

And meadows many-hued, yet find no rest,

But making moan which never doth abate,

Do wander up and down disconsolate.

Go, heart of mine, and whisper in her ear

That I am like a tree no longer green,

Where Winter's barrenness may be foreseen

In branch and bough, by Autumn's touch made sore;

And like the leaves which rough winds violate,

The days from off my life drop desolate.

And if that move her not, go, kiss each lip,

And tell her that I can no longer live,

Unless she come again to me, and give

Her sweet and ever-constant fellowship.

And from her lips thou shalt not separate

Until she swear to be compassionate.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by all Booksellers.